

Claims

[c1] 1. A virtual-space providing apparatus which is connected to a user terminal via a network, and which provides said user terminal with various kinds of services through a three-dimensional virtual space created in the network, said virtual-space providing apparatus comprising:

virtual room providing means for providing a virtual room imitating a real room of a user using said user terminal, which can be browsed using the user terminal connected via the network, on the three-dimensional virtual space;

virtual store providing means for providing a virtual store on the user terminal connected via the network, said virtual store selling virtual commodities imitating real commodities, on the three-dimensional virtual space; and

benefit-information transmitting means, wherein, when the user purchases a virtual commodity in the virtual store provided by said virtual store providing means using said user terminal, benefit information showing a benefit of purchasing the virtual commodity is transmitted to said user terminal.

[c2] 2. A virtual-space providing apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein, when a virtual commodity is purchased in the virtual store using said user terminal, said virtual store providing means places the virtual commodity in the virtual room.

[c3] 3. A virtual-space providing apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein, when a commodity is purchased in the real store, said virtual store providing means places a virtual commodity imitating the real commodity in the virtual room.

[c4] 4. A virtual-space providing apparatus according to Claim 2 or 3, wherein said virtual store providing means comprises an accumulating means for accumulating virtual commodities as three-dimensional image data.

[c5] 5. A virtual-space providing apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein, when an intention to purchase a real commodity corresponding to the virtual commodity purchased by using said user terminal and placed in the virtual room is presented by using said user terminal, said virtual store providing means establishes connection with an on-line shopping device on the network selling real commodities.

[c6] 6. A virtual-space providing system, which is connected via a network to a user

terminal used by a user, a real-store terminal installed in a store in a real space, and a virtual-space providing apparatus providing said user terminal with various kinds of services through a three-dimensional virtual space, wherein said virtual-space providing apparatus comprises:

virtual room providing means for providing a virtual room imitating a real room of the user using the user terminal, which can be browsed using the user terminal connected via the network, on the three-dimensional virtual space;

virtual store providing means for providing the user terminal connected via the network with a virtual store selling virtual commodities imitating real commodities, on the three-dimensional virtual space; and

benefit-information transmitting means for transmitting benefit information to the user terminal so that in the real space the user can get a benefit from purchasing a virtual commodity, when the virtual commodity is purchased in the virtual store provided by said virtual store providing means; and

said user terminal comprises:

a removable storage medium; and

writing means for writing the benefit information transmitted from said benefit-information transmitting means, on said storage medium.

7. A virtual-space providing system according to Claim 6, wherein said real-store terminal comprises reading means for reading the benefit information written on the storage medium, wherein said real-store terminal provides the user terminal with the benefit according to the benefit information read by the reading means.

8. A virtual-space providing system according to Claim 6, wherein, when a virtual commodity is purchased in the virtual store by using the user terminal, said virtual store providing means places the virtual commodity in the virtual room.

9. A virtual-space providing system according to Claim 6, wherein said real-store terminal comprises commodity information transmitting means for transmitting at least commodity information showing the purchased commodity, when a real commodity is purchased, to said virtual store providing means; and said virtual store providing means places a virtual commodity imitating the purchased commodity, in the virtual room according to the commodity information transmitted from said commodity information

transmitting means.

[c10]

10. A virtual-space providing method for providing a user terminal connected via a network, with various kinds of services through a three-dimensional virtual space created in the network, said method comprising the steps of:

providing a virtual room imitating a real room of a user using the user terminal, on a three-dimensional virtual space so that the virtual room can be browsed using the user terminal connected via the network; and

providing a virtual store for selling virtual commodities, which can be placed in said virtual room, on the three-dimensional virtual space; wherein

when a virtual commodity is purchased in said virtual store using said user terminal, benefit of purchasing the virtual commodity is given to said user terminal so that the user can enjoy the benefit in a real store.

[c11]

11. A virtual-space providing method according to Claim 10, wherein benefit information corresponding to a benefit of purchasing said virtual commodity is written on a removable storage medium provided in said user terminal; and when said storage medium is brought to the real store, a benefit is given according to the benefit information written on said storage medium.

[c12]

12. A virtual-space providing method according to Claim 10, wherein, when intention to purchase a real commodity corresponding to a virtual commodity, which has been purchased using said user terminal and has been placed in the virtual room, is presented, connection with on-line shopping on the network selling real commodities is established.

[c13]

13. A virtual-space providing method according to Claim 10, wherein, when a commodity is purchased in the real store, a virtual commodity imitating the purchased commodity, is placed in the virtual room.